

Message Text

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ACTION ORM-02

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P R 130959Z DEC 76
FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3043
INFO USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 14429

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SREF
SUBJECT: PROPOSED PROCEDURES FOR CONDITIONAL ENTRY
PROCESSING FOR INDOCHINESE REFUGEE BOAT CASES

REF: STATE 301032

1. I TALKED WITH ALAN DONALD, HKG POLAD, DECEMBER 13 STRESSING
THAT THIS WAS AN INFORMAL SOUNDING OF HKG VIEWS AND WAS
PREDICATED ON AN ADEQUATE INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE TO THE
PROBLEM, PARTICULARLY BY COUNTRIES IN THE AREA; THE USG HAS NOT
YET FIRMLY DECIDED ON THIS PROGRAM AND THE UNHCR REACTION TO
IT HAS NOT BEEN RECEIVED. HOWEVER, AS DONALD KNOWS THE USG
HAS BEEN URGING AN INTERNATIONAL APPROACH TO CARING FOR AND
RESETTLING VIETNAMESE REFUGEES ESCAPING IN SMALL BOATS.
AT THE SAME TIME, UNITED STATES HAS BEEN TRYING TO COME
UP WITH SOME PROCEDURES WHICH GIVEN THE REALITIES OF OUR
IMMIGRATION LEGISLATION WOULD ALLOW US TO TAKE EARLY AND
EFFECTIVE ACTION TO RESETTLE A FAIR SHARE OF THESE REFUGEES
IN THE UNITED STATES ONCE SUCH AN INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM
GOT UNDERWAY. I THEN DESCRIBED THE PROGRAM IN GENERAL TERMS,
EMPHASIZING THAT SINCE PEOPLE ATTACHED TO THE CONSULATE
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GENERAL WOULD BOTH CONTROL THE PRESCREENING AND THE LOCAL

PROCESSING WE COULD ASSURE THE HKG THAT NOT TOO MANY REFUGEES WOULD BE HERE AT ONE TIME OR STAY TOO LONG. IN EFFECT, THEY WOULD BE HERE IN TRANSIT, WHICH SHOULD MAKE IT EASIER FOR HONG KONG GOVERNMENT TO ACCEPT THEM.

2. I WENT ON TO SAY THAT WE FULLY UNDERSTOOD THE HKG'S DESIRE THAT HONG KONG NOT BE REGARDED AS A PROCESSING POINT AND THAT THEY WOULD BE CONCERNED OVER OUR REQUIREMENTS FOR SOME FORM OF DOCUMENTATION. HOWEVER, SINCE THE SYSTEM OF DOCUMENTATION WE USED FOR THE AVA REFUGEES CAUSED NO DIFFICULTIES, WE WOULD LIKE TO ASK WHETHER THE HKG WOULD CONSIDER PROVIDING SIMILAR DOCUMENTATION FOR THIS PROPOSED SCHEME IF WE COMPLIED WITH THE SAME CONDITIONS, NAMELY THAT THE EXISTENCE OF THE TRAVEL DOCUMENT WOULD NOT BE MADE KNOWN EITHER TO THE RECIPIENT OR TO OTHER FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS. WE WOULD ALSO TRY TO OBTAIN AN UNHCR GUARANTEE THAT IN THE REMOTE POSSIBILITY ANY OF THE REFUGEES PROCESSED THROUGH HONG KONG WOULD BE DEPORTED FROM THE UNITED STATES THEY WOULD BE RESETTLED ELSEWHERE. I POINTED OUT THAT OF THE MANY THOUSAND CHINESE REFUGEES RUN THROUGH THE CE PROGRAM SO FAR NONE HAS BEEN RETURNED TO HONG KONG.

3. DONALD WAS MILDLY RECEPTIVE AND SAID THAT HE WOULD QUERY OTHER OFFICIALS INVOLVED AND BE BACK TO ME BEFORE HE LEAVES ON THE 18TH. HE ASKED ME WHETHER WE INTENDED TO RAISE THIS PROJECT ELSEWHERE, AND I REPLIED THAT WE WERE THINKING OF INFORMING THE BRITISH EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON OF OUR PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS. DONALD SEEMED TO THINK THAT IT MIGHT GET TOO MANY PEOPLE INTO THE ACT IF WE DID THIS AT THIS TIME AND SUGGESTED THAT IT WOULD BE BETTER TO WAIT UNTIL WE HAD AT LEAST A PRELIMINARY REACTION FROM THE HKG BEFORE INFORMING THE FCO EITHER IN LOND OR WASHINGTON. I AGREED THAT WE WOULD HOLD OFF BUT WARNED HIM THAT SHOULD IT TURN OUT THAT THE ONLY WAY THE USG COULD CARRY OUT ITS PART OF THIS HUMANITARIAN PROJECT WAS ALONG THE LINES I HAD OUTLINED HE COULD EXPECT THAT WE WOULD PURSUE IT VIGOROUSLY AND AT AS HIGH A LEVEL AS NECESSARY. CROSS

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